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VIA ECFS

EX PARTE

May 8, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90; A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, GN Docket No. 09-51; Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, WC Docket No. 07-135; High-Cost Universal Service Support, WC Docket No. 05-337; Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, CC Docket No. 01-92; Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, CC Docket No. 96-45; Lifeline and Link-Up, WC Docket No. 03-109; Universal Service Reform – Mobility Fund, WT Docket No. 10-208; Notice of Public Information Collection(s) Being Reviewed by the Federal Communications Commission

Dear Ms. Dortch:

CenturyLink has previously filed comments suggesting clarifications and other improvements to the draft FCC Form 481 (Form) and its accompanying instructions (Instructions).¹ CenturyLink has also participated in discussions with Commission staff regarding potential modifications to the Form and Instructions.² This letter reiterates certain general suggestions and provides some specific additional suggestions to ease the burden of completing this data request and improve the quality of the information collected.

General Suggestions To Ease The Burden Of Completing FCC Form 481

The Commission should afford sufficient flexibility to carriers in completing the form to enable carriers to make the most effective use of their existing systems and processes to gather the data and provide the information requested. This includes affording flexibility in the following ways:

¹ CenturyLink's Paperwork Reduction Act Comments Regarding Draft FCC Form 481, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, *et al.* (Apr. 26, 2013).

² See Verizon *ex parte* letter, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, *et al.*, (Apr. 15, 2013); Verizon *ex parte* letter, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, *et al.*, (May 3, 2013).

- Allow carriers flexibility in providing the requisite certifications. This includes flexibility in the statement of certification as well as the logistics of certification. Companies that will be completing this form for many ETCs should be given the flexibility to complete the certifications through a single document that they can upload as an attachment to the form.
- Allow carriers the flexibility to upload spreadsheets to the form that provide the information requested as opposed to line by line manual entry into worksheets provided on-line. This would be especially helpful for certain categories of information requested including lists of tribal lands served, lists of affiliates, voice pricing data and broadband pricing data. Permitting information to be provided in this manner would also reduce the likelihood of input error.
- Allow carriers the flexibility to report information confidentially. For example, carriers may choose to seek confidential treatment of broadband pricing data and should be allowed to submit some or all of that information confidentially as they deem appropriate. While broadband prices offered to customers are not confidential, the manner in which the Commission is requesting the broadband pricing information -- by town, exchange, speed, capacity limit, capacity limit action, and as bundled with other services -- results in a blueprint of competitively sensitive information that a carrier may want to provide confidentially. Other information that carriers may choose to report confidentially includes customer data, outages, line or loop counts, and indicators that narrow a rate or rate deficiency to a geographic area below the Study Area (such as exchange or town name). The Commission should offer the Form in a manner that enables reporting carriers to seek confidential treatment of information as they deem appropriate upon submission of the Form.

Specific Suggestions To Improve The Quality Of The Data Collection

CenturyLink offers the following additional specific suggestions to improve the quality and usefulness of this data collection.

- **Carrier Data Collection Form**, Draft Instructions Pages 9–10 – Lines 400 through 450 regarding reporting the number of complaints per 1,000 customers for various specified services reference lines 070 through 075, but there are no such lines on the draft form and no specific line instructions for such lines in the draft Instructions. There is also nowhere to report the break out of information that seems to be requested in Lines 400-450. The Commission should clarify how carriers are to report the information requested.
- **Carrier Data Collection Form**, Draft Instructions Page 11 – Line 800 (and Page 22 – Purpose) seems to request the Study Area Codes for affiliate companies, but there is

nowhere on the draft Form to provide this information. To the extent that the Commission is seeking this information it should clarify that carriers may provide this information by adding a column to the spreadsheet that they would upload to provide the affiliate information sought in the data collection.

- **Service Outage Reporting (200)**, Draft Instructions, Page 16 – Line 220 – Column e. This section implies that you can select multiple service descriptions for the type of outage reported. The Commission should confirm that all selected descriptions on this section, and all responses on any sections where multiple drop-down options can be selected, will print on a final copy of the report to be submitted to the Commission, state commissions, and tribal governments.
- **Voice Price Offering Including Voice Rate Data Collection (700)**, Draft Form 481, Line 702 Residential Local Service Charge Effective Date. This line is a single line in the top section of the Form. The Instructions (page 17) define this date as “the effective date of the local service rates which has been approved by the state or territorial regulatory agency with jurisdiction.” Given this definition of effective date, there could be multiple rates in a single Study Area with multiple approval dates. As USTelecom has already noted, it is not clear what the practical utility of gathering this date information is.³ The Commission should articulate the purpose of gathering this information. To the extent that the Commission concludes that there is a practical use that warrants gathering this date information, the Commission should clarify how a carrier could provide different effective dates for different rates, if necessary. Preferably, carriers could provide this information as an additional column on the spreadsheet that it would upload to provide the voice rate pricing information generally.
- **Broadband Price Offerings Data Collection (710)**, Draft Instructions, Page 20 – Line 711, Column b1 – Residential Rate. This line instructs carriers to “[r]eport the total rate offered to residential customers for the relevant service (e.g., stand-alone broadband; bundled broadband and voice; bundled broadband, voice, and video; bundled broadband, voice, video, and mobile).” The Commission should make this instruction more precise as there are many ways to interpret “total rate.” CenturyLink interprets that carriers should report their standard rate for the service without promotional pricing or fees such as modem lease fees. Also, to the extent a carrier offers bundled pricing where its broadband service is bundled with services of third-party providers, it should only report the bundled price for the service(s) that it provides in the bundle. The reporting carrier

³ See The United States Telecom Association’s Petition for Reconsideration and Clarification and Comments in Response to Paperwork Reduction Act, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, *et al.* at pp. 17-18 (Apr. 4, 2013).

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has no control over the other providers' service prices and no permission from those providers to report those prices.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeffrey S. Lanning

Copy via email to:

Alexander Minard
Chris Cook